Prevention Dimensions Program

Brief Program Description

Prevention Dimensions is a statewide curriculum delivered by teachers to all students in Utah, kindergarten through 12th grade. The Utah State Office of Education administers the program in cooperation with Local Substance Abuse (SA) Authorities from the Utah State Division of Substance Abuse. The local SA authorities have prevention specialists responsible to train teachers throughout Utah who deliver the curriculum to all students. Prevention Dimensions focuses on enhancing academic performance and strengthening students bonding to school by giving them a sense of identity and achievement through activities addressed in the curriculum.

These activities are designed to reduce the likelihood that children will engage in high-risk behaviors. Prevention Dimensions is based and consistently evaluated on the risk and protective factor model. The curriculum highlights the three R's of prevention that are: Respect for self, Respect for others, and Respect for the environment.Prevention Dimensions is a statewide curriculum delivered by teachers to all students in Utah, kindergarten through 12th grade. The Utah State Office of Education administers the program in cooperation with Local Substance Abuse (SA) Authorities from the Utah State Division of Substance Abuse. The local SA authorities have prevention specialists responsible to train teachers throughout Utah who deliver the curriculum to all students.

Program Strategies

The Prevention Dimensions curriculum addresses the following goals: to build students' self-esteem; to provide objective information about ATOD; to help students acquire and practice problem solving, decision making, valuing, coping, communication, and other life skills, such as prosocial behavior; and to help students withstand peer and other societal pressures to use alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. The curriculum is presented within the school's health education program, by the regular classroom teachers. The presentation format consists of movies, art projects, writing assignments, demonstrations, group discussions, games, and role-playing. Although the lesson plans are standardized, the teachers are free to choose which of these lessons they will present.

Population Focus

Prevention Dimensions is universally implemented statewide to students pre-kindergarten through 12th grade in all 40 of Utah's school districts.

Suitable Settings

The program is designed as a school-based approach and is suitable for implementation in a school setting.

Required Resources

The Prevention Dimensions curriculum is required.

Implementation Timeline

Students receive approximately 40 hours of Prevention Dimensions lessons and activities each year they are in school.

Outcomes

A series of program evaluations has been conducted. Results included:

- A 1989 evaluation of 10th grade students showed encouraging trends with regard to decreased mount of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and cocaine use in the past month. This evaluation further demonstrated that Prevention Dimensions delays the onset of substance abuse for a substantial percentage of high school students.
- A later evaluation indicated that alcohol use among 6th grade students in Utah decreased during the four years following the statewide implementation of Prevention Dimensions.
- An evaluation of the cumulative impact of the program compared a group of 6th graders in 1984 to 6th graders in 1988. Results indicated that both monthly and lifetime alcohol use was significantly lower among students sampled in 1988.

There was a significant difference in monthly and lifetime marijuana use between the 1984 and 1988 sample, with students surveyed in 1988 using significantly less marijuana in both cases.

Contact Information

For indepth information on this program, please use the contact listed below.

Program Developer
Verne Larsen
Utah State Office of Education
250 East Cesar E. Chavez Blvd., 500 South
P.O. Box 144200
Salt Lake City, UT 84114-4200
Phone: 801-538-7500
Email: vlarsen@usoe.k12.ut.us